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ANTIMISSILE NET AT SEA PROPOSED

Ship-Based Defense System
That Would Bolster Nike-X
Pressed by the Navy

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 3—The Navy, with the encouragement of Defense and Army officials, is pressing studies of an antimissile missile system based on large submarines and warships. Such a system, it is said, could increase the protection of the United States by stationing water-borne antimissile platforms in international waters off Communist China and the Soviet Union to get an early chance to intercept long-range missiles fired from those countries.

And, in a crisis situation involving friendly nations such as Japan, proponents say, an antimissile fleet could be placed in position between that nation and a potential aggressor to reduce or even eliminate the threat of nuclear blackmail. Defense officials say the pro-

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Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

posed Navy system would not compete with the Army's Nike-X missile defense. A decision is expected this fall on whether to start deployment of a \$4-billion to \$5-billion Nike-X system around the United States to provide a "thin" defense of the entire country against a Chinese-type threat, as well as tight defense around Minuteman silos.

The Navy system, code-named SABMIS for Seaborne Anti-Ballistic Missile Intercept System, would make Nike's job more manageable by knocking down large numbers of enemy intercontinental ballistic missiles well before they reached airspace over the United States.

And, in the event that the Russians and later the Chinese introduce very sophisticated ICBM's that employ penetration

devices, multiple warheads and maneuvering warheads, officials say, SABMIS — if deployed far enough forward — could intercept some of these missiles before they have a chance to make use of such advanced devices.

Pentagon officials say the Navy system could be deployed in special submarines under the North Polar icecap, in surface and subsurface fleets off the Aleutian Islands, and in several other locations even closer to enemy territory. They say that such ships have unlimited deployment possibilities so long as they stay in international waters.

Last month, when the Navy advised industry that it was about to put out some preliminary design studies for the new system, 31 companies rushed in an expressed interest in participating.

From the list the Navy selected six companies — Hughes Aircraft, Martin-Marietta, Boeing, Aerojet-General, McDonnell-Douglas and Raytheon — to compete for a six-month study on the design of the system.

Initially, the Navy was

thinking of using either the present Polaris missile booster or a new booster for SABMIS, but the Defense Department urged the Navy to make use of the Army-developed Spartan and Sprint missiles.

Now, Navy officials say they contemplate making use of Nike-X technology instead of undertaking an entirely new development program. The Army has already spent more than \$2-billion developing the Nike system.

Use on Ships Possible

"We feel that anything that has been developed for land basing may also be based on ships," a Navy planner said.

He said it was hoped that the industry studies would come up with the best combination of submarine and ship platforms to insure survival against a surprise attack, as well as effective interception of enemy ICBM's.

There would always have to be some surface ships in any deployment, he said, in order to get good radar coverage of the defended area.

The Navy planner said that a

fan could be drawn on a globe with the apex at the point of ICBM launching. The fan would spread out across the globe to the extreme range of the missile. The closer the missile defense to the point of launching, the smaller the section of the "threat fan" to be defended, he noted.

An antimissile fleet positioned off the Aleutians, he said, would be athwart the path of missiles aimed at the western half of the United States.

A high ranking Army Nike-X specialist was just as enthusiastic. He commented:

"The Navy system is both feasible and attractive. It could intercept enemy ICBM's before they can deploy most of their penetration aids; it would reduce the number of missiles Nike-X would have to contend with; and it would tremendously increase the enemy's technological problems by forcing him to become very sophisticated indeed if he wants to stand any chance of getting his ICBM's past both the mid-course and terminal phase defenses."